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AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley   
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – SAND HILL  
GROUP HOME**

We have completed a review of Sand Hill Group Home (Group Home or Agency) operated by Sand Hill, Inc. The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Sand Hill Group Home is a six-bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 12-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Sand Hill Group Home was providing services for five Los Angeles County DCFS children. Sand Hill Group Home is located in the Second District.

**Scope of Review**

The purpose of the review was to determine whether the Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covered basic child safety and licensing issues, and included an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, facility inspections, and interviews with two children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with the residents were designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency, and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*

**Summary of Findings**

Generally, the Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. However, the Agency needs to improve the quality of the Needs and Services Plans and the quarterly reports; ensure that there is appropriate documentation, authorization and evaluation for children who are prescribed psychotropic medication; and document monthly clothing allowance deposits and expenditures.

Attached is a detailed report of the review findings.

**Review of Report**

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. The Agency's management is required to provide a corrective action plan to the Children's Group Home Ombudsman within 15 business days from the receipt of this report. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact DeWitt Roberts at (626) 293-1101.

JTM:DR:CC:jdh

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer  
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS  
Richard Shumsky, Chief Probation Officer  
Gene Brown, Executive Director, Sand Hill Group Home  
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee

**Sand Hill Group Home  
12108 South Normandie Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90044  
(323) 777-5588  
License No.: 191801773  
Rate Classification Level: 9**

## **I. Facility and Environment**

*(Facility Based - No Sample)*

**Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Two**

### **Comments:**

The Sand Hill Group Home (Group Home or Agency) is located in a residential community. The Group Home is clean and comfortable. The Group Home is appropriately maintained and blends well with other homes on the block. There were no observable safety hazards.

The interior of the Group Home is generally neat and clean. The décor provides a home-like atmosphere. The common rooms are nicely decorated and maintained. The resident bedrooms are comfortable and personalized to each child's desire with posters, pictures, and knick-knacks.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a VCR. There are books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs.

There is a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items and fresh fruit. The food is accessible, appropriately dated and properly stored.

### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **II. Program Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Two**

**Comments:**

Residents meet the Agency's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. The residents received an initial diagnostic assessment after being admitted into the Agency's program.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) do not consistently cite needs and/or objectives in a specific and measurable manner. There was no documentation to support the placement worker's participation in the development and update of the NSPs.

The quarterly reports address various areas in depth. However, the objectives of NSPs are not consistently stated in a specific and measurable manner. Consequently, the quarterly reports do not sufficiently focus on the goals of the NSPs.

The residents are provided with psychological testing, and emotional and developmental counseling as required by their Program Statement. Records document that the residents receive regular weekly individual and/or group therapy.

**Recommendations****1. Sand Hill management needs to:**

- a. **Develop Needs and Services Plans that consistently note specific and measurable objectives.**
- b. **Provide the residents' authorized representatives copies of the NSP and the opportunity to participate in the development and update of the NSP.**
- c. **Develop comprehensive quarterly reports that focus on and discuss the objectives noted in the NSP.**

**III. Educational and Emancipation Services****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews****Sample size for resident interviews: Two****Comments:**

The residents attend local public schools. One resident receives special education services and his file contained a current Individualized Education Plan. Both files contained current report cards/progress reports.

The residents report that they are provided with a sufficient amount of daily educational stimulation away from school and feel that the Group Home is supportive of their

academic progress.

The Agency's program includes the development of residents' daily living skills. Residents are involved in the planning and preparation phase of meals. Hygiene care is discussed as needed and employment preparation encouraged.

Residents are offered the opportunity to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Residents have the opportunity to work and manage their own money.

### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **IV. Recreation and Activities**

### **Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

#### **Sample size for resident interviews: Two**

#### **Comments:**

The Agency provides opportunities for residents to participate in recreational activities. Residents expressed satisfaction with the recreational activities and stated that the recreation schedules are followed.

The Group Home utilizes local community organizations for recreational and program resources. The residents reported that they participate in planning some of the activities. The residents have free time and are able to participate in self-selected activities.

Transportation was provided to and from the scheduled activities.

### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **V. Psychotropic Medication**

### **Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents for one case file**

#### **Comments:**

The resident prescribed psychotropic medication did not have a current court authorization. The Agency's management indicated that they were unaware that the

prescribed medication was categorized as psychotropic. The child's pediatrician prescribed the medication; consequently a psychiatrist had not seen the child within the last 30 days.

The distribution log was clear, accurate and organized.

### **Recommendations**

#### **1. Sand Hill Group Home management needs to:**

- a. Ensure that there is a current and accurate court authorization for each child that is prescribed psychotropic medication.**
- b. Ensure that any child who is prescribed psychotropic medication is provided with a monthly psychiatric evaluation by the prescribing psychiatrist.**

## **VI. Personal Rights**

### **Method of assessment – Resident interviews**

#### **Sample size for resident interviews: Two**

#### **Comments:**

Residents expressed satisfaction with the Agency and its staff. Residents participate in an initial orientation and the Group Home's policies and procedures are posted. Residents reported that they feel safe in the Group Home and that there is no interference with their daily living functions.

Residents reported satisfaction with the taste of the food and with their ability to participate in menu development. They reported that there is sufficient staff supervision and expressed satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff. Residents feel there is at least one staff member they can easily talk to and trust.

Residents reported that they are assigned chores to complete on a daily basis that are reasonable and not too demanding. Residents are able to have visitors and make and receive personal telephone calls. They are permitted to contact their social workers, attorneys, and family members as needed. Residents are able to attend weekly religious services of their choice and feel that the Agency is respectful of their cultural lifestyles. The Agency allows the residents to celebrate holidays.

Residents reported that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Residents are aware of their right to refuse medication.

**Recommendations**

There are no recommendations for this section.

**VII. Clothing and Allowance**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Two**

**Comments:**

The Agency provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. The Group Home supplies its residents with the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance and the residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to residents is of good quality and of sufficient quantity. However, monthly clothing expenditures are not properly documented in the log notes or clothing logs.

The Agency provides residents with the required minimum base allowance, which they are able to increase according to the Agency's behavioral system. Residents are permitted to spend their allowances as they choose.

The Agency provides residents with adequate personal care items and adequate storage.

Residents are provided with an opportunity to maintain photo albums/life books.

**Recommendation**

- 2. Sand Hill Group Home management properly maintain clothing allowance logs to reflect that all residents are receiving the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance.**